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| **ATTACHMENT D: BIDDER RESPONSE FORM** This form is broken into Seven sections: Section 1. Administrative Response; Section 2. EO 18-03 Response; Section 3. Washington Small Business; Section 4. Certified Washington Veteran-owned Business; Section 5. Management Response; and Section 6. Technical Response. Bidders must respond to all questions in the order and in the expandable space provided. If a question requires Bidder to submit additional documents, please attach them to this document and label them clearly as part of your response to this Attachment D.  |
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| 1 | **BIDDER INFORMATION (ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSE)**Bidder’s response to the questions in this Section 1, combined with the information provided in Bidder’s Submittal Letter and Certifications and Assurances, comprise Bidder’s Administrative Response to this Solicitation. While the Administrative Response is not given a number score, the information provided as part of Bidder’s Administrative Response may cause the Bid to be disqualified and may be considered in evaluating Bidder’s qualifications and experience.  | **MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS** |
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| a | Please indicate whether you employ or Contract with current or former state employees. If the answer is yes, provide the following information with respect to each individual: 1. name of employee or contractor; 2. the individual’s employment history with the State of Washington; 3. a description of the Individual’s involvement with the response to this Solicitation; and 4. the Individual’s proposed role in providing the services under this any Contract that may be awarded.  | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER:Tahoma Peak Solutions does not employ or Contract with current or former state employees.  |  |
| b | Please list the names and contact information of three individuals you agree may serve as Bidder references and may freely provide information to DSHS regarding the reference’s experience and impressions of Bidder. In providing these names, Bidder represents that it shall hold both DSHS and the organizations and individuals providing a reference harmless from and against any and all liability for seeking and providing such reference. | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER:Reference #1:Full Name: A-dae Romero-Briones (Cochiti/Kiowa)Organization: First Nations Development InstituteTitle/Role: Vice President, Policy & Research, California Tribal Fund, Nourishing Native Foods & HealthRelationship to Bidder: Reoccurent ClientPhone Number: (808) 563-0041Email: abriones@fndi.org Mailing Address: 2432 Main Streen Longmont, CO, 80501Project/Engagement Name: 1. [2024 First Nations Food Sovereignty Summit](https://www.firstnations.org/events/2024-food-sovereignty-summit/): First Nations Development Institute engaged Tahoma Peak Solutions (TPS) to plan, assemble, and host their biannual conference in Suquamish, Washington, bringing together hundreds of grantees focused on Tribal Food Sovereignty initiatives. TPS collaborated with the Suquamish Tribe, regional artists, tribal leaders, and food sovereignty advocates to design an agenda centered on movement-building and community engagement.2. [Native Nutrition Policy Report,](https://www.firstnations.org/publications/native-nutrition-policy/) Published 2024: First Nations Development Institute partnered with TPS to conduct a literature review and interviews with subject matter experts across Indian Country to better understand Native nutrition policy needs. The report identified barriers and solutions to addressing nutritional deficits in Native communities and offered advocacy recommendations for tribal, state, and federal policymakers.3. [Traditional Food Storage On the Northern Great Plains Report](https://www.firstnations.org/publications/traditional-food-storage-on-the-northern-great-plains/), Published 2022: TPS collaborated with First Nations Development Institute to summarize key findings from qualitative interviews with grantees developing food pantries and food storage solutions for Native communities in the Great Plains region. The report highlighted best practices and challenges in food storage efforts focused on serving Native communities.Reference #2: Full Name: Chris IberleOrganization: City of Seattle, Office of Sustainability and EnvironmentTitle/Role: Food Policy & Programs Strategic AdvisorRelationship to Bidder: Current ClientPhone Number: (206) 914-6194Email: chrisiberle@seattle.gov Mailing Address: 700 5th Avenue #1868, Seattle, WA, 98104Project Engagement Name:1. Values Based Food Purchasing Framework Development: The City of Seattle’s Office of Sustainability and Environment engaged Tahoma Peak Solutions (TPS) to co-design a comprehensive **Values-Based Food Purchasing (VBFP) framework** and implementation tools. This collaborative effort involved TPS working closely with food and climate justice leaders, City staff, and community partners to create a framework centered on equity, sustainability, and local economic support.TPS led **consultations, subcontract management, participatory workshops,** and stakeholder engagements to develop and refine the VBFP framework. The process included: -Facilitating engagement with the City’s food program contractors (such as Seattle Public Schools and hunger relief organizations).-Designing and leading high-engagement workshops with diverse project partners.-Developing tools and key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the framework’s effectiveness.-Compiling feedback and insights to inform the final VBFP framework and accompanying materials.

The engagement is still ongoing but will conclude by the end of 2024 and will result in a **final VBFP framework,** including core value definitions, and tools to support implementation, along with a summary report outlining the development process.Reference #3: Full Name: Lauren Gwin, PhdOrganization: Oregon State University’s Center for Small Farms & Community HealthTitle/Role: Extension Community Food Systems Specialist and Associate Professor, Crop and Soil Science DepartmentRelationship to Bidder: Current ClientPhone Number: (541) 737-1569Email: lauren.gwin@oregonstate.eduMailing Address: 107 Crop Science Building Corvallis, OR, 97331Project Engagement Name: 1. Partnership with Oregon State University on USDA Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center: In 2023, Tahoma Peak Solutions (TPS) is partnering with Oregon State University (OSU) as part of the USDA-funded Regional Food Business Center initiative. This multi-year project aims to strengthen regional food economies, support food businesses, and improve access to local, culturally relevant foods, particularly within Indigenous communities. TPS provides strategic leadership to advance the inclusion of Native food systems within the regional framework.

TPS collaborates closely with all partners of the Rocky Mountain Regional Food Business Center on the following:* Engage tribal food producers and businesses in the region, ensuring their needs and insights were reflected in project planning.
* Facilitate workshops and convenings with Indigenous food leaders to foster collaboration and amplify Native food systems.
* Develop resources and strategies to help Native-owned food enterprises navigate challenges and access USDA programs.
* Contribute to the design of equity-centered business tools and frameworks for long-term regional food resilience.

This partnership supports the Tahoma Peak Solutions [“**Native Grown and Gathered”**](https://www.nativegrownandgathered.com/) initiative, reinforcing our mission to cultivate sovereignty through Indigenous food systems by developing sustainable networks that honor traditional practices while building economic resilience.  |  |
| c | Please indicate whether your Response contains any variations from the requirements of the Solicitation Document. If the answer is yes, list each variation with specificity and include the pertinent page numbers containing the variation. | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER: No, our submission contains no variations from the requirements outlined in the Soliciation Document.  |  |
| d | Please indicate whether you are requesting that DSHS consider any exceptions and/or revisions to the sample contract language found in Attachment A. If so, state the page of Attachment A on which the text you request to change is found, and state the specific changes you are requesting. DSHS shall be under no obligation to agree to any requested changes, and will not consider changes to contract language or negotiate any new language not identified in response to this question.  | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER: We are not requesting any exceptions or revisions to the sample contract language found in Attachment A. |  |
| e | If Bidder considers any information that is submitted as part of its Response to be proprietary, please identify the numbered pages of Bidder’s Response containing such information and place the word “Proprietary” in the lower right hand corner of each of these identified pages.  | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER: Our submission does not contain any proprietary information. |  |
| f | Please indicate whether you have had a contract terminated for cause or default within the past five (5) years. If so, please provide the terminating party’s name, address and telephone number and provide a summary describing the alleged deficiencies in Bidder’s performance, whether and how these alleged deficiencies were remedied and any other information pertinent to Bidder’s position on the matter. “Termination for Cause” refers to any notice to Bidder to stop performance due to Bidder’s asserted nonperformance or poor performance and the issue was either (a) not litigated; (b) litigated with a resulting determination in favor of the other party; or (c) is the subject of pending litigation. | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER:We have not had any contracts terminated for cause or default within the past five years. |  |
| g | Please identify any prior contracts Bidder has entered into with the State of Washington within the past ten (10) years and identify the dates and nature of the contract and primary agency contact for each.   | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER:Not applicable – we have not entered into any contracts with the State of Washington within the past ten (10) years. |  |
| h | Please indicate whether Bidder has been the subject of a lawsuit or administrative proceeding alleging a failure to comply with laws relating to the types of services Bidder proposes to provide pursuant to this Competitive Solicitation. If the answer is yes, please list the nature of the allegations, docket number, disposition and date (if applicable) and Bidder’s explanation of how it has changed its practices or operations relative to any alleged deficiencies since that proceeding was filed. | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER:Not applicable.  |  |
| i | Please describe your proposed plans for the use of Subcontractors in performing this Contract, listing each Subcontractor, its proposed role, and the estimated percentage of the Contract that will be performed by each Subcontractor. Please indicate whether each Subcontractor self-identifies or is certified as a Washington small business, a minority-owned business, a woman-owned business, a disadvantaged business enterprise, or a veteran-owned business. If the answer is yes, please identify the type of organization(s) and provide details of any certifications. Note that all Subcontractors must be approved by DSHS. | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER:  |  |
| J | Please describe any programs, policies or activities of your organization that support human health and environmental sustainability in your business practices. If a program, policy or activity is specifically applicable to this Contract, please indicate so. | NOT SCORED |
|  | ANSWER:  |  |
| **2** | **BIDDER EO 18-03 CERTIFICATION** | MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS |
|  |  |  |
| EO | Are your employees required to sign, as a condition of employment, a mandatory individual arbitration clause and/or a class or collective action waiver?**Please Note:** Points for this question will be awarded to bidders who respond that they do not require these clauses and waivers. If you certify here that your employees are NOT required to sign these clauses and waivers as a condition of employment, and you are the successful Bidder, a term will be added to your Contract certifying this response and requiring notification to DSHS if you later require your employees to agree to these clauses or waivers during the term of the Contract. | **1** |
|  | ANSWER: We do not require these clauses.  |  |
| **3** | **BIDDER CERTIFICATION –WASHINGTON SMALL BUSINESS** | MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS |
|  | Are you a Washington Small Business as defined under **RCW 39.26.010**? According to **Chapter 39.26.010 RCW**, to qualify as a Washington Small Business, Bidder must meet three requirements: * 1. *Location*. Bidder’s principal office/place of business must be located in and identified as being in the State of Washington. A principal office or principal place of business is a firm’s headquarters where business decisions are made and the location for the firm’s books and records as well as the firm’s senior management personnel.
	2. *Size*. Bidder must be owned and operated independently from all other businesses and have either: (a) fifty (50) or fewer employees; or (b) gross revenue of less than seven million dollars ($7,000,000) annually as reported on Bidder’s federal income tax return or its return filed with the Washington State Department of Revenue over the previous three consecutive years.
	3. *WEBS Certification*. Bidder must have certified its Washington Small Business status in Washington’s Electronic Business Solution ([WEBS](http://www.des.wa.gov/services/ContractingPurchasing/Business/Pages/WEBSRegistration.aspx)).
 | **2** |
|  | ANSWER: Tahoma Peak Solutions meets the bidder certification criteria outlined in this question.  |  |
| **4** | **BIDDER CERTIFICATION – CERTIFIED WASHINGTON VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS** | MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS |
|  | Are you a Certified Washington Veteran-Owned Business as defined under **RCW 43.60A.190**?According to **Chapter 43.60A.190 RCW**, to qualify as a Certified Washington Veteran-Owned Business, Bidder must meet four requirements: 1. *51% Ownership. Bidder must be at least fifty-one percent (51%) owned and controlled by:*
2. *A veteran is defined as every person who at the time he or she seeks certification has received a discharge with an honorable characterization or received a discharge for medical reasons with an honorable record, where applicable, and who has served in at least one of the capacities listed in RCW 41.04.007;*
3. *A person who is in receipt of disability compensation or pension from the*

 *Department of Veteran’s Affairs; or*1. *An active or reserve member in any branch of the armed forces of the United States, including the national guard, coast guard, and armed forces reserves.*
2. *Washington Incorporation/Location. Bidder must be either an entity that is incorporated in the state of Washington as a Washington domestic corporation or, if not incorporated, an entity whose principal place of business is located within the State of Washington.*
3. *WEBS Certification. Bidder must have certified its Veteran-Owned business status in Washington’s Electronic Business Solution (*[*WEBS*](http://www.des.wa.gov/services/ContractingPurchasing/Business/Pages/WEBSRegistration.aspx)*).*
4. *WDVA Certification. Bidder must have provided certification documentation to the Washington Department of Veterans’ Affairs WDVA) and be certified by WDVA and listed as such on WDVA’s website (*[*WDVA – Veteran-Owned Businesses*](https://www.dva.wa.gov/veterans-their-families/veteran-owned-businesses/vob-search)*).*
 | **2** |
|  | ANSWER: Not applicable – we are not a Certified Washington Veteran-Owned Business. However, we are proud to be a **Minority Women-Owned Business** and a **Native American/Tribal-owned organization**. |  |

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| **5** | **BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE (MANAGEMENT RESPONSE)** | MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS |
|  | **MANDATORY EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS** |  |
| A | Does your firm currently have a Washington state business license, or able to secure one prior to the start of the anticipated contract? | **PASS/FAIL** |
|  | ANSWER: Yes. Tahoma Peak Solutions has a Washington State Business License |  |
| B.  | Is your firm a tribally-run or native-led organization focused on serving native communities?  | **PASS/FAIL** |
|   | ANSWER: Yes, Tahoma Peak Solutions is a Native women-owned consulting firm specializing in food sovereignty initiatives within tribal communities. We decades of experience and have collaborated with every tribe in Washington state. |  |
| C. | Does your firm have experience gathering data with tribes or native communities? | **PASS/FAIL** |
|  | ANSWER:Yes, we at Tahoma Peak Solutions have extensive experience gathering data with tribes and Native communities. Our work involves conducting **food sovereignty assessments**, building culturally relevant food systems, and facilitating partnerships with Indigenous communities across the country. We also design and lead **focus groups, listening sessions, and community workshops** to gather insights from tribal partners. Rooted in Indigenous methodologies, we ensure that the data collected reflects the priorities and perspectives of Native stakeholders.We have collaborated with numerous organizations, governments, municipalities, non-profits, foundations and tribes both in Washington state and nationwide, demonstrating a strong track record in **data-driven initiatives** that support food sovereignty and Native-led business development efforts. Our approach emphasizes relationship-building and culturally responsive practices, fostering trust and mutual respect within the communities we serve.  |  |
|  | **DESIRED EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS** |  |
| D | Please describe the experiences, skills and qualifications your organization possesses that are relevant to an evaluation of your ability to perform the Contract that is the subject of this Solicitation. Please ensure that your answer to this question includes all information that you wish DSHS to consider in determining whether you meet the minimum Bidder qualifications set forth in the Solicitation Document. Responses should include: * Years and type(s) of experience working with and gathering data with native communities.
* Years and type(s) of experience with federal funding and collaborating with government agencies.
* Approach to collaborating with government agencies and meeting federal funding priorities such as cost effectiveness, timeliness, and efficiency while honoring native timelines, priorities and culture.
* Previous work or working relationships with tribes and native communities within Washington’s borders.
 | **10** |
|  | ANSWER: At **Tahoma Peak Solutions (TPS)**, we bring significant experience, skills, and qualifications relevant to performing the contract outlined in this solicitation. Below is a detailed summary of our expertise:**1. Years and Type(s) of Experience Working with and Gathering Data with Native Communities**We specialize in working with tribes and Native communities, **gathering data through culturally responsive methods** such as food sovereignty assessments, listening sessions, and focus groups. Our projects emphasize Indigenous methodologies that reflect the priorities and values of Native stakeholders. For example, we have led **food sovereignty initiatives** for tribal communities across the U.S., including projects with the Muckleshoot and Coeur d'Alene Tribes​.**2. Years and Type(s) of Experience with Federal Funding and Collaborating with Government Agencies**TPS has extensive experience working with **federal funding initiatives**. A prime example is our involvement in the USDA-funded **Regional Food Business Center** project, where we partnered with Oregon State University to support Native food producers through USDA programming​. Additionally, we have secured funding through philanthropic and federal channels to build sustainable food systems, contributing to **$1.2 million** directed toward tribal initiatives since our founding​.**3. Approach to Collaborating with Government Agencies and Meeting Federal Funding Priorities**Our approach balances **cost-effectiveness, timeliness, and efficiency** while prioritizing **Native timelines, culture, and values**. We work closely with stakeholders to co-design solutions, ensuring projects align with community goals and federal requirements. In our **Values-Based Food Purchasing Framework Development** for the City of Seattle, we engaged both large and small food service contractors to collect feedback, gain critical insights and are on track to deliver a culturally-informed final framework on time and within budget​.**4. Previous Work or Working Relationships with Tribes and Native Communities within Washington’s Borders**We are proud to have partnered with **every tribe in Washington state** on a range of initiatives, including food sovereignty projects, cultural preservation efforts, and public health campaigns​. Notably, our leadership team has deep roots in Indian Country, with expertise in **facilitation, cultural responsiveness, and strategic planning** that fosters trust and meaningful collaboration with Native communities.Our work reflects not only our technical ability to deliver complex projects but also our commitment to **uplifting Indigenous voices and ensuring long-term sustainability**. We believe our experience and approach position us well to meet the objectives and standards required by this solicitation. |  |
| E | Please provide the names of the key team members you will assign to this Contract, if you are the Successful Bidder, and provide their proposed roles and copies of resumes describing the relevant experience they possess. Relevant experience and qualifications should include:* Knowledge of tribal customs, cultures and sovereignty.
* Knowledge of preferred data collection methods, outcome measures, and metrics when working with tribal data.
* Knowledge of data sovereignty and experience with community-led interpretation and analysis of data.
* Experience facilitating data collection with tribes and native communities via community outreach such as tribal council participation, focus groups and listening/visioning sessions.

Bidder should note that if awarded a contract, it may not reassign its key personnel from the Project without prior approval of DSHS. | **10** |
|  | ANSWER: **Key Staff:** **1. Valerie Segrest (Muckleshoot) – Co-Founder and Project Lead**Valerie Segrest is a renowned Native nutritionist and food sovereignty advocate with over a decade of experience leading community-based initiatives. As the co-founder of Tahoma Peak Solutions (TPS), Valerie specializes in community-driven research focused on increasing access to traditional foods and creating culturally relevant curricula. Her work is rooted in community-based participatory research (CBPR), ensuring that research outcomes align with the values and priorities of the communities she serves.Key Achievements:* Launched the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project: Valerie led this initiative to increase access to traditional foods in her community, developing educational programs and conducting assessments through participatory research that identified and addressed barriers to food access​.
* Authored Several Reports and Publications: Her published works include "Feeding Seven Generations: A Salish Cookbook" and contributions to other culturally relevant reports focused on Indigenous food systems. These projects were grounded in community-driven research to promote cultural sustainability and health​.
* Directed Research for TPS’s Values-Based Food Purchasing Framework: Valerie led research efforts in collaboration with the City of Seattle, gathering data from food system stakeholders and community partners to design a framework rooted in equity, cultural sustainability, and economic impact​.
* Participated in Urban Indigenous Resilience Research: Valerie has contributed to studies exploring how Indigenous knowledge can shape sustainable urban development, focusing on the intersection of cultural practices, food systems, and community well-being

**2. Nora Frank-Buckner (Nez Perce/Klamath) – Director of Food Sovereignty Programs**Nora brings over a decade of experience in public health, chronic disease prevention, and food sovereignty initiatives. She excels in coalition-building, strategic planning, and facilitation. Nora previously served as the Director of Food Sovereignty Initiatives for the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, where she coordinated tribal food systems efforts and led the development of strategic frameworks to address food insecurity.Key Achievements:* Developed the NW Tribal Food Sovereignty Coalition and spearheaded assessments and policy work to enhance food security within Native communities​.
* Certified in Technology of Participation (ToP) facilitation methods, further enhancing her ability to guide meaningful collaboration.

Nora’s experience working with government agencies and tribal partners positions her as a key asset for managing relationships and aligning with federal funding priorities.**3. Lisa Wilson (Muckleshoot) – Lead Research Strategist and Coordinator**Lisa Wilson is a PhD student at the University of Washington’s College of Education and an enrolled member of the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe. She specializes in research, evaluation, technical writing, and curriculum development. With a background in social work and Indigenous research methodologies, Lisa is dedicated to promoting land-based education that supports the holistic well-being of Native students.Key Achievements:* Led curriculum development efforts for the Muckleshoot Tribe, creating programs centered on land-based learning in collaboration with state parks and forestry operations​.
* Founder of FEED Seven Generations, a Native-led non profit organization dedicated to revitalizing community health practices and promoting sustainable land management strategies​.
* Experienced in conducting research on Indigenous health and urban resilience, ensuring TPS’s work reflects the needs and values of Native communities.

Lisa’s expertise in qualitative research and culturally sustaining curriculum strengthens TPS’s capacity to design and implement impactful programs in alignment with Indigenous priorities.**Relevant Experience and Qualifications:**This team of key staff at Tahoma Peak Solutions possesses significant experience, expertise, networking and qualifications that ensure our ability to perform the work required by this contract. Below is a detailed overview of our relevant competencies as it pertains to this project.**Years and Type(s) of Experience Working with and Gathering Data with Native Communities**TPS specializes in working with Native communities across the U.S., particularly in Washington state, applying Indigenous research methodologies and culturally appropriate data collection practices. Co-founder Valerie Segrest (Muckleshoot) has over a decade of experience leading food sovereignty initiatives, such as the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project, where she conducted assessments and facilitated community-based participatory research to improve access to traditional foods​.Lisa Wilson (Muckleshoot), will be the lead consultant for this project and has expertise in qualitative research and evaluation. Her work includes gathering data on health and well-being within the Muckleshoot Tribe and contributing to research on urban resilience for Indigenous people in Seattle. Nora Frank-Buckner (Nez Perce/Klamath) brings over 10 years of experience working with tribal communities as well. As Program Manager of Food Sovereignty Initiatives for the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, she coordinated assessments and coalition efforts, ensuring that data collected aligned with community priorities. Working closely through the Epidemiological Center, Nora conducted research spanning food sovereignty strategic planning for the Northwest region to the impacts of COVID-19 on hunger in tribal households throughout the Pacific Northwest. Her work has culminated in the creation of the Food Sovereignty Sub Committee for the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians, a committee that she continues to chair and usher to this day.These experiences ensure that TPS’s methodologies remain culturally relevant and impactful across diverse Native setting.We are confident that these experiences ensure that our methodologies are culturally relevant and aligned with Native community priorities.**Years and Type(s) of Experience with Federal Funding and Collaborating with Government Agencies**TPS has extensive experience working with federal funding initiatives and collaborating with government agencies. We are actively involved in the USDA-funded Regional Food Business Center, in partnership with Oregon State University, where we support Native food businesses through strategic guidance and resources tailored to meet USDA standards​.Nora Frank-Buckner, Planning Director, previously served as Project Mangaer of Food Sovereignty Initiatives for the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board. In this role, she managed federally funded programs and coordinated efforts with tribal, state, and regional partners to address food insecurity and promote sustainable food systems​. She also worked as a SNAP educator prior to that and has in depth experience of the SNAP programs. This deep experience with federal funding requirements and agency collaboration equips TPS to meet any compliance and funding priorities efficiently.**Approach to Collaborating with Government Agencies and Meeting Federal Funding Priorities**At TPS, we prioritize cost-effectiveness, timeliness, and efficiency while honoring Native timelines, culture, and values. In our work with the City of Seattle’s Planning Department, we collaborated with several Indigenous groups to provide key insights towards developing a Native Neighborhood in key subareas of the city, including Downtown and Northgate. Additionally, we developed the Indigenous Inclusivity Guide to help city planners and their partners better understand the unique needs and key insights in design strategies that can uphold the values of Indigenous groups the city aims to support and better serve. This included the design of key performance metrics that reflect cultural sustainability and economic equity while adhering to the city’s operational needs and timelines​.Our approach to government collaboration emphasizes relationship-building, trust, and shared leadership. Through culturally responsive facilitation and strategic planning, we co-create solutions with government partners that align with Indigenous community goals while meeting federal funding priorities.**Previous Work or Working Relationships with Tribes and Native Communities within Washington’s Borders:**TPS has worked with every tribe in Washington state on a variety of projects, from food sovereignty initiatives to public health campaigns. Our team has established long-term partnerships with tribes such as the Muckleshoot, Coeur d'Alene, and Nez Perce Tribes, building coalitions and networks that promote Indigenous well-being and food security​. Lisa Wilson’s work developing land-based education curricula with the Muckleshoot Tribe and Nora Frank-Buckner’s coalition-building efforts with Northwest tribes further demonstrate our deep-rooted connections within Washington’s Native communities​. **Conclusion**The combined experience of Valerie Segrest, Nora Frank-Buckner, and Lisa Wilson makes TPS exceptionally qualified to perform this contract. Their expertise in food sovereignty, research, coalition-building, and Indigenous education ensures TPS can meet the project's objectives while respecting the timelines, culture, and priorities of Native communities. With strong relationships across Washington's tribes, TPS is well-prepared to collaborate effectively with government agencies and deliver high-quality outcomes. |  |
| F | Attach samples or provide links of actual work products developed by your organization based on data collection and evaluation. Examples from working with native communities is preferred, but not required. Limit to no more than three samples.  | **5** |
|   | ANSWER: **Example 1: Native Grown and Gathered 2024 Report**The **Native Grown and Gathered (NGG) 2024 Report**, developed by Tahoma Peak Solutions, provides a comprehensive analysis of Indigenous food systems, focusing on the intersection of traditional ecological knowledge and modern practices to promote food sovereignty. The report is based on **data collected through community engagement, stakeholder interviews, and qualitative research** with Native food producers and organizations. It offers **recommendations for policy advocacy** and strategies to support Native-led food businesses and sustainable agricultural practices.This report exemplifies Tahoma Peak's ability to **integrate culturally appropriate data collection and analysis** to develop actionable insights for tribal communities.For the full report, you can access it here: [NGG 2024 Report](https://issuu.com/tahomapeaksolutions/docs/ngg_report_2024_final).**Example 2: Portland Area Food Sovereignty Survey**The Portland Area Food Sovereignty Survey captures detailed insights into the food access, consumption habits, and cultural connections of Native individuals in the Portland metro area. This survey combines quantitative and qualitative methods, gathering data from a diverse group of respondents, 87% of whom identified as members or descendants of Native American/Alaska Native tribes. Key areas explored include access to traditional foods, barriers to food sovereignty, and levels of engagement with gardening, hunting, and fishing practices.The results provide actionable insights, identifying significant barriers such as distance, space limitations, and convenience. Respondents also expressed a strong desire for programming focused on cultural food practices, gardening, and food preservation. Additionally, the survey highlights gaps in access to hunting and fishing rights, as well as the need for better community engagement and educational resources.This product exemplifies TPS’s ability to collect meaningful data and translate it into practical recommendations for advancing food sovereignty. The findings are instrumental in shaping community-driven food programs and informing policy changes to better align with the priorities of Native communities in the region.***(Report PDF provided as email attachment)*** |  |

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| **6** | **BIDDER’s SOLUTION AND PROPOSED APPROACH (TECHNICAL RESPONSE)** | MAXIMUM TOTAL POINTS |
| A | Please describe your interpretation of food sovereignty and proposed strategies that would enable SNAP-Ed to better support the needs and elevate assets of tribes and native communities. Your response to this question should include:* A definition of food sovereignty.
* A comparison of how SNAP-Ed goals and priorities can support food sovereignty or possibly undermine food sovereignty efforts.
* Strategies that ensure SNAP-Ed work is meaningful for native communities while also aligning with federal requirements.
 | **10** |
|  | ANSWER: To effectively align SNAP-Ed programming with the needs and priorities of Native communities, it is essential to integrate a food sovereignty framework that recognizes the cultural, ecological, and economic significance of Indigenous food systems. At Tahoma Peak Solutions (TPS), we understand food sovereignty as more than just access to nutritious food—**it is about empowering Indigenous communities to control their own food systems, reflecting traditional knowledge and practices while building resilience and sustainability​.** SNAP-Ed can support, rather than hinder, food sovereignty efforts through culturally relevant strategies, meaningful collaboration with Native communities, and advocacy for flexible federal guidelines. Drawing on TPS's extensive experience in food sovereignty projects, we are able to propose effective strategies that ensure SNAP-Ed meets both federal standards and the unique needs of Indigenous communities​.**How SNAP-Ed Can Support or Undermine Food Sovereignty Efforts**SNAP-Ed, which aims to improve nutrition and promote healthy behaviors among low-income populations, can both align with and potentially conflict with food sovereignty goals:* **Opportunities for Alignment**:SNAP-Ed’s focus on nutrition education and healthy eating can complement food sovereignty by promoting culturally appropriate foods that are already integral to Native diets in Washington, such as salmon, berries, and native plants​. Additionally, SNAP-Ed can fund community gardens, educational programs, and traditional food workshops that help tribal communities reconnect with their ancestral food systems.
* **Potential Conflicts**:However, SNAP-Ed’s federal guidelines can be rigid and sometimes undermine sovereignty efforts by limiting what foods qualify for purchase under the program or by promoting Western dietary standards that may not reflect Indigenous cultural values. When SNAP-Ed programs emphasize calorie counting or exclude traditional foods, they risk alienating Native communities and disrupting local food systems​.

**Proposed Strategies for Aligning SNAP-Ed with Food Sovereignty**To align SNAP-Ed programs with the needs and priorities of Native communities, Tahoma Peak Solutions (TPS) proposes an integrated strategy grounded in Indigenous food sovereignty principles and culturally relevant partnerships. This approach ensures that programs empower Native communities to manage their own food systems sustainably. Below is a comprehensive strategy addressing key topics.**1. Culturally Relevant Nutrition Education**SNAP-Ed can integrate Indigenous knowledge systems into its programming by offering workshops on traditional foods like salmon, wild greens, and berries, combined with modern dietary practices. TPS’s work on the Muckleshoot Food Sovereignty Project has demonstrated that culturally relevant education strengthens community engagement and promotes healthier food choices​. [The Native Plants and Foods Institute](https://www.nativeplantsandfoodsinstitute.com/), operated by TPS, provides a platform to expand these efforts through community workshops, curricula, and professional development, reinforcing traditional knowledge and sustainable food systems. 1. **Partnerships with Tribal Organizations and Food Leaders**

Collaboration with local tribes and food advocates ensures that SNAP-Ed aligns with tribal priorities while respecting Indigenous timelines. By involving tribal leaders and food sovereignty advocates in program design and delivery, SNAP-Ed can build trust and mutual respect with Native communities. TPS’s experience in facilitating partnerships, such as through the USDA Regional Food Business Center, exemplifies how multi-stakeholder collaborations can support food sovereignty while meeting federal goals​**3. Flexible Funding Models and Advocacy for Policy Change**To fully support food sovereignty, SNAP-Ed must advocate for more flexible federal guidelines that allow the inclusion of traditional foods within program eligibility. Current federal regulations sometimes exclude traditional foods from SNAP coverage, limiting the ability of Indigenous communities to integrate their cultural foods into food assistance programs. TPS has demonstrated the power of community-driven advocacy, working with local and federal agencies to advance policy changes that reflect Indigenous foodways and improve program inclusivity​**4. Capacity Building and Long-term Sustainability**Capacity building is essential to ensure that Native communities have the tools and knowledge to sustain their food sovereignty initiatives. TPS specializes in facilitating coalitions and networks that empower communities to take ownership of food programs. For example, TPS has led capacity-building efforts in public health and food systems through technical assistance, training, and network facilitation. These initiatives ensure that sustainable systems are developed from within the community, fostering long-term resilience​.**Conclusion**By integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, collaborating with tribal partners, advocating for flexible policies, and focusing on capacity building, SNAP-Ed can align with food sovereignty efforts while meeting federal requirements. Tahoma Peak Solutions' experience demonstrates that meaningful, community-driven food programs are achievable when Native voices are centered. This approach ensures that SNAP-Ed promotes both health equity and cultural sustainability within Native communities. |  |
| B  | Please describe your organization’s methods for qualitative and quantitative research, and how the results from such research will provide useful insight into the needs of tribes and native communities. Responses to this question should include at a minimum: * Research methods your organization has used in the past when working with tribes and native communities.
* How those methods resulted in relevant and useful information, and how that information was utilized.
* Which methods your organization plans to use in this solicitation to engage with tribes and native communities, and why those methods will be most effective.
 | **15** |
|   | ANSWER: We use Indigenous methodologies for both qualitative and quantitative research, ensuring our work aligns with the cultural practices, values, and needs of Native communities. Our research emphasizes collaboration, participatory processes, and storytelling—methods rooted in Indigenous traditions of knowledge sharing. Below is a summary of the methods we employ, how they provide actionable insights, and the strategies we plan to use for this solicitation.**Research Methods Used in Past Projects**1. Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)
	* CBPR emphasizes co-creation of knowledge, where community members are involved at every stage of the research process. These participatory methods ensure that research outcomes are actionable and aligned with the community's goals for increasing food sovereignty​.
2. **Qualitative Storytelling and Focus Groups**
	* TPS uses storytelling and focus groups to collect qualitative data, capturing the lived experiences and knowledge of Native community members. For example, TPS collaborated with the Muckleshoot Behavioral Health Department to develop an herbal wellness program, incorporating traditional plant knowledge gathered from focus groups with tribal elders and health professionals​. These narratives inform culturally appropriate health and wellness interventions.
3. **Surveys and Data Collection through Networks and Coalitions**
	* TPS gathers quantitative data through surveys and assessments conducted in collaboration with tribal networks, such as the NW Tribal Food Sovereignty Coalition. Surveys assess food access, health outcomes, and program impact, generating data that guides coalition strategies and advocacy efforts​.

**How Results Have Provided Useful Insights and Informed Action****The insights gained from TPS’s research have been instrumental in:*** Designing community-driven programs: For example, the [Klamath Tribes Food Sovereignty Project](https://vimeo.com/779616638/4c724534cf), used research findings to create targeted initiatives, such as traditional foods workshops and knowledge exchanges, that directly addressed the barriers identified during community consultations​.
* Shaping policies and securing funding: Research conducted through TPS has informed policy recommendations and secured additional funding for initiatives like the [Regional Food Business Center](https://foodsci.oregonstate.edu/foodsci/native-grown-and-gathered-cultivating-sovereignty-through-indigenous-food-systems), helping Native food producers access federal programs​.
* Developing culturally relevant curricula and interventions: The data collected through TPS’s partnerships with tribally led and operated educational and health departments resulted in curriculum resources such as the [Cedar Box Teaching Toolkit](https://www.nativeplantsandfoodsinstitute.com/cedar-box) and [Tend, Gather, Grow.](https://www.nativeplantsandfoodsinstitute.com/tend/tend-gather-grow)

**Proposed Methods for This Solicitation and Their Effectiveness**1. Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)
	* CBPR will continue to be a cornerstone of our approach, ensuring tribes have ownership of the research process. This method fosters trust and ensures that findings are directly relevant to the needs and priorities of Native communities.
2. Qualitative Storytelling and Listening Sessions
	* Listening sessions and storytelling will be used to gather context-rich qualitative data, allowing us to understand the cultural and historical context behind community needs. This approach is effective because it builds on traditional knowledge-sharing practices, making community members feel respected and heard.
3. Mixed Methods: Surveys and Focus Groups
	* A combination of surveys and focus groups will provide both quantitative and qualitative insights. Surveys will capture measurable data on food access and program impact, while focus groups will provide deeper context on the challenges and successes faced by participants.
4. Collaboration with the Native Plants and Foods Institute
	* The Institute will serve as a resource hub for curriculum development and technical assistance, ensuring that the programs developed through SNAP-Ed align with Indigenous values and support long-term sustainability​.

**Conclusion**TPS’s research methodologies are rooted in Indigenous practices, emphasizing collaboration, storytelling, and participatory processes. These methods have consistently provided actionable insights that inform community-driven programs and policy recommendations. For this solicitation, TPS will apply CBPR, qualitative storytelling, and mixed methods to ensure that the research not only meets federal requirements but also honors the cultural values and priorities of the tribes and Native communities we serve. |  |
| C | Please describe your organization’s approach to conducting a tribal needs assessment that will be meaningful for native communities while also accomplishing the goals of the SNAP-Ed program. Responses to this question should at minimum include:* A timeline and description for each phase of the project i.e.: planning, outreach, data gathering, data analysis, summarizing and stortytelling, and making recommendations for a tribal state plan.
* The number of tribes and native communities within Washington’s borders you plan to engage with, why, and by which methods.
* How your organization intends to identify and engage with a representative sample of tribal leaders, elders, youth, families, and SNAP-Ed eligible individuals in tribes and native communities during the data gathering phase.
* How your organization will review the synthesis of findings and prioritization of needs with the tribes and native communities involved in the assessment and incorporate feedback.
* You organization’s approach to addressing setbacks and challenges.
 | **25** |
|  | ANSWER:**1. Timeline and Phases of the Project****Phase 1: Planning (Months 1–2)*** **Activities:** Establish partnerships with tribal leaders, organizations, and SNAP-Ed administrators. Develop a culturally relevant assessment framework rooted in Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) to ensure the process reflects Indigenous methodologies​.
* **Outcome:** Finalize project timelines, consent processes, and data collection tools in collaboration with tribes.

**Phase 2: Outreach and Relationship Building (Months 2–4)*** **Activities:** Host listening sessions and pre-assessment meetings with tribal councils, elders, and community stakeholders to discuss the goals of the assessment and ensure alignment with community needs and timelines.
* **Outcome:** Build trust and co-develop outreach strategies with each tribe, ensuring cultural sensitivity in all communications.

**Phase 3: Data Gathering (Months 4–8)*** **Activities:** Conduct focus groups, surveys, interviews, and storytelling sessions with a diverse sample, including tribal leaders, youth, families, and SNAP-Ed-eligible individuals. Gather both qualitative and quantitative data on food access, nutrition education, and community priorities​.
* **Outcome:** Collect comprehensive data that reflects both measurable outcomes and community narratives.

**Phase 4: Data Analysis and Synthesis (Months 8–10)*** **Activities:** Analyze the data, combining quantitative survey results with qualitative insights from storytelling. Identify key themes, challenges, and opportunities that align with SNAP-Ed priorities while honoring community-driven goals.
* **Outcome:** Develop a draft report summarizing findings.

**Phase 5: Review, Feedback, and Prioritization (Months 10–11)*** **Activities:** Present preliminary findings to each participating tribe and facilitate feedback sessions to ensure accuracy and relevance. Collaborate with communities to prioritize needs and recommendations for the tribal-state SNAP-Ed plan​.
* **Outcome:** Refine the report and incorporate tribal feedback into final recommendations.

**Phase 6: Final Recommendations and Tribal-State Plan (Months 11–12)*** **Activities:** Develop and present the final tribal-state SNAP-Ed plan, co-designed with participating tribes, ensuring it aligns with both federal SNAP-Ed goals and Indigenous food sovereignty principles​.
* **Outcome:** Deliver a plan that includes actionable recommendations for improving nutrition education and food access in tribal communities.

**2. Number of Tribes and Native Communities to Engage**TPS plans to engage all 29 federally recognized tribes in Washington State, prioritizing communities based on their SNAP-Ed eligibility and interest in participating. By leveraging existing relationships with tribes through TPS’s previous projects, we will ensure broad and representative participation​.**3. Identifying and Engaging a Representative Sample**To gather a representative sample, TPS will:* Partner with tribes and Native-led organizations to identify leaders, elders, and youth representatives.
* Utilize focus groups and interviews to engage families and SNAP-Ed-eligible individuals.
* Collaborate with tribal schools, clinics, and food programs to reach diverse community members, ensuring input from those directly benefiting from SNAP-Ed services​.
* Offer compensation and flexible participation options (in-person and virtual) to accommodate participants’ schedules and needs.

**4. Reviewing Findings and Incorporating Tribal Feedback**Throughout the project, we will present findings back to each tribe involved in the assessment. Feedback sessions will allow for open discussion, corrections, and prioritization of needs from the community’s perspective. TPS’s experience with coalition facilitation ensures transparent collaboration in reviewing and finalizing recommendations​.**5. Approach to Addressing Setbacks and Challenges**We are prepared to navigate challenges through flexibility and adaptive strategies. Potential setbacks, such as scheduling conflicts, staff turnover, or survey fatigue, will be mitigated by:* Maintaining open communication with tribal partners and adapting timelines as needed to respect tribal priorities.
* Leveraging relationships with multiple tribal organizations to ensure continuity and access to participants.
* Utilizing hybrid engagement methods (virtual and in-person) to accommodate changing conditions, such as weather or pandemic restrictions​.

**Conclusion**TPS’s approach to conducting a tribal needs assessment integrates Indigenous methodologies, collaborative engagement, adaptive project management, and culturally relevant data collection to ensure meaningful outcomes. Through community-based participatory research (CBPR), qualitative storytelling, and quantitative surveys, TPS co-develops the process with tribes, ensuring the findings reflect the unique priorities and perspectives of Native communities. This collaborative approach strengthens relationships with tribal leaders, elders, youth, families, and SNAP-Ed-eligible individuals, providing a comprehensive understanding of community needs.The approach is designed to generate actionable insights that align with both tribal goals and federal SNAP-Ed priorities, balancing cultural sustainability with regulatory compliance. TPS's experience in building coalitions, facilitating partnerships, and navigating federal guidelines ensures the creation of an inclusive, tribal-state SNAP-Ed plan that advances food sovereignty, nutrition education, and long-term sustainability. By empowering tribes to lead their own food systems and co-creating solutions, this plan will foster resilient, culturally relevant food programs that promote health, well-being, and economic strength across Native communities. |  |